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HEADLINE: Reagan Says Spy Bill Protects "'Heroes Of A Grim Twilight Struggle'"

BYLINE: By TERENCE HUNT, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

President Reagan, calling CIA agents the "heroes of a grim twilight struggle," signed into law Wednesday a bill making it a crime to disclose the names of American spies.

The ink was barely dry on the controversial legislation before civil rights officials denounced it as blatantly unconstitutional and offered legal assistance to challenge it.

Reagan flew by helicopter to the sprawling CIA complex in nearby Langley, Va., to sign the bill before an audience of several thousand agency employees sitting on a sun-drenched lawn.

Inside the headquarters, he also gave a private pep talk to clandestine employees the CIA did not want to be seen by the press.

Even on the heavily guarded grounds, extra security precautions were taken. Agency employees had to walk through metal detectors before they could attend the signing ceremony and Secret Service agents were stationed about 25 feet apart outside the fence bordering the property.

The bill makes it a crime _ for the first time _ to disclose the name of a covert intelligence agent even if the information is obtained from public records.

It provides penalties of up to 10 years in jail and \$50,000 in fines for government employees who expose the identities of covert U.S. intelligence agents living in foreign countries.

Those outside government, including reporters and scholars, could be imprisoned up to four years and fined \$15,000 for revealing names of spies if there was reason to believe such actions would disrupt American intelligence operations.

Referring to the arguments over the bill's constitutionality, Reagan said, "The Congress has carefully drafted this bill so that it focuses only on those who would transgress the bounds of decency _ not those who would exercise their legitimate right of dissent.

"This carefully drawn act," he said, "recognizes that the revelation of the names of secret agents adds nothing to legitimate public debate over intelligence policy.

"It is also a signal to the world that while we and this democratic nation remain tolerant and flexible, we also retain our good sense and our resolve to protect our own security and that of the brave men and women who serve us in difficult and dangerous intelligence assignments," he said to applause from

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